



# Barry-Eaton District Health Department

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TESTIMONY FOR HB 6205

June 30, 2010

By

Eric Pessell, Director

Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Environmental Health Division

President, Michigan Association of Local Environmental Health Administrators

On behalf of the Environmental Health Administrators and the Barry-Eaton District Health Department, I am here today to ask for your support of HB6205. I have been practicing the Environmental Public Health profession for seventeen years and not a day goes by that I don't learn something new or experience something for the first time. While most of our work goes unnoticed, you all experienced the outcome of what we do just today. Whether it was the water you took a shower with, the food you ate for breakfast, the air you breathed in your home or the day care you dropped your kids off at, you all believed and probably did not think about the fact that it was safe. These things we take for granted but it is the practicing EH professional who assures the safety and provides the oversight of these day to day needs. The practice of Environmental Health goes back centuries but with emerging diseases and pathogens such as West Nile Virus, H1N1 and Ecoli Bacteria and since 9-11 responding to threats and emergencies the need for a competent work force could never be more important. This bill assures a level of education and training to meet the challenges of our ever changing world, I would think the great citizens of Michigan would expect nothing less. There is great consensus for this bill, a majority of the practicing professionals, the regulated industry and Public Health Associations all support this bill. You may hear today of some reasons why you shouldn't support this bill, some may say that what they do is not the work of a Sanitarian because they don't call themselves a sanitarian. What someone calls themselves, their work title, is not at issue, the practice of what they do is the issue and I submit here today that anyone who works or practices within the defined scope of this bill, whether they work for State Government, Local Government or private practice shall be competent and licensed. You may hear today that there is a cost to employers from this bill, I disagree. The expectation of payment for licensure is on the practitioner not the employer.

For these reasons and other you have heard today I urge you to pass this bill out of committee and move it to a full vote on the house floor. Article IV, Section 51 of the Michigan Constitution states: The public health and general welfare of the state are hereby declared to be matters of primary public concern. The legislature **shall** pass suitable laws for the protection and promotion of public health. This bill will both protect public health by assuring competency and promote public health.

Thank you

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